In preschool or pre-kindergarten, activity time should focus on two critical areas:

(1) developing an understanding of whole numbers to 10, including concepts of one-to-one correspondence, counting, cardinality (the number of items in a set), and comparison; and (2) recognizing two-dimensional shapes, describing spatial relationships, and sorting and classifying objects by one or more attributes. Relatively more learning time should be devoted to developing children’s sense of number as quantity than to other mathematics topics.

(1)   Young children begin counting and quantifying numbers up to 10. They begin with oral counting and recognition of numerals and word names for numbers. Experience with counting naturally leads to quantification. Children count objects and learn that the sizes, shapes, positions, or purposes of objects do not affect the total number of objects in the group. One-to-one correspondence matches each element of one set to an element of another set, providing a foundation for the comparison of groups and the development of comparative language such as *more than, less than,* and *equal to*.

(2)   Young children explore shapes and the relationships among them. They identify the attributes of different shapes, including length, area, and weight, by using vocabulary such as *long, short, tall, heavy, light, big, small, wide, narrow*. They compare objects using comparative language such as *longer/shorter, same length, heavier/lighter*. They explore and create 2- and 3-dimensional shapes by using various manipulative and play materials such as popsicle sticks, blocks, pipe cleaners, and pattern blocks. They sort, categorize, and classify objects and identify basic 2-dimensional shapes using the appropriate language.